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PREKESE

Posted on April 1, 2013 by Sal under Food and recipes

MY NEXT CULINARY ADVENTURE BEGAN WHEN I READ IN THIS BLOG ABOUT something called prekese which I had seen for sale in the market. Hearing that “The smell is so strong that any passerby knows that somebody is cooking with or burning prekese. For this reason it is a symbol of power i.e. the king whose power reaches into all abodes in his kingdom even though he’s not physically there” made me definitely want to smell this and find out more about it, so, along with my latest load of shopping I bought some prekese...



Three prekese pods, half my haul. They are each about 8 inches long

I'd already asked friends and colleagues here about it, but I could only describe it, as I couldn't remember the name and I hadn't bought any yet. It didn't seem to ring a bell with anyone – no-one said 'ah, yes, that's for....'.

So, I researched it and managed to find out that it's also called aridan fruit and is from the pea family. In Latin its name is *Tetrapleura tetraptera* and it grown on the edges of equatorial forests in West Africa. I also found out that it has lots of uses in traditional herbal medicine, from killing molluscs (so it has been used before to help treat and control schistosomiasis), to treating malaria and encouraging milk flow in lactating mothers. It's said to be anti-inflammatory and so helps treat arthritis and rheumatism and also has properties that help to control type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure too. Much of this information comes from the folklore of the tribes around here – and it is being backed up by

scientific research these days as well:

It's number 4 on [this site](#)

And [this is an article](#) all about it!

Anyway, I had my prekese, and knew it would be good for me – but what to do with it (and would it taste good)? I figured if they make syrup out of it then I could try boiling it in sugar water and seeing if that worked. I had also read that when put into soups etc it is first broken up. So I got our grinder and proceeded to smash the pods – they were really tough and took a real bashing!



This is a traditional Ghanaian grinder, made out of some kind of ceramic/stoneware with a rough surface on the inside and a wooden 'basher'. It's about 12 inches diameter

I then put the pieces into the sugar water and boiled – and pretty soon a strong aroma was filling the house, and it smelled good! I boiled until the sugar water was dark brown and sticky, having sneaky little tastes along the way...



Boiling up the prekese – it took quite a lot of bashing to get the pieces that 'small'!

It was quite delicious – not fruity, more like vanilla or carob, it has that kind of chocolatey/toffee/coffee-like quality to it. It really is good! I just don't understand why it hasn't made the big-time and instead has become an almost forgotten spice of W Africa. And not only is it delicious, it's good for you!

There does seem to be an initiative to encourage the production of prekese syrup – [see here](#) – if you can get some do, it's really tasty! I bet you could use syrup to flavour toffee and fudge and cakes and biscuits as well as diluting it to make a soft drink which is what I did with mine, with the addition of a little lime juice.



Here I am taking my medicine



The tree

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5 thoughts on “Prekese”



Aba

August 20, 2013 at 4:55 pm

It is amazing how there is little recipe information about prekese. just got some today and will be trying it out in my soup and then for a drink. I will see how it can be used in my natural hair too if it is that good for the body.

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KChie

October 16, 2013 at 12:27 am

Thanks for the shout-out, the further research, and the prekese.

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Timothy Titus Glover

December 29, 2013 at 10:05 am

Pour hot water on prekese (give it a mild roast for increased aroma), garlic and ginger add a teabag and some sugar plus milk if preferred and wait a little for it

to brew and that's it your health just improves in many departments.

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Felicia Atanga

March 10, 2014 at 8:26 pm

prekese is a very good traditional medicine
for every

one, I wish one should try it

Reply

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Sabina

March 18, 2014 at 3:03 am

I live in Nashville TN and I am a seasoning blend man. we call this spice ‘4 corners’ for lack of a traditional name. It is easily the best exotic spice that comes out of the forest in West Africa. I have it in my seasoning blends and it just adds to the already exotic nature of my blends. You can check my blends out on Motherlandspices.com and prekese is part of my ‘Peppersoup – All Purpose seasoning’. Thanks for the write-up. I was actually looking for the scientific name of this plant and I am so happy to know all the other qualities that it has.

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